

Panchayat Schools in Madras. (1938-44)

Year	No. of Schools Provided	No. of Schools that Worked	No. of Teachers Employed	No. of Pupils
1938-39	1512	1463	1983	70699
1939-40	1512	1471	2037	72975
1940-41	1512	1455	2033	73790
1941-42	1512	...	1970	70265
1942-43	1512	1492	1893	75517
1943-44	...	...	...	...
1944-45	1512	1380	1950	70247

(Figures for 1941-42 and 1943-44 were not fully available).

Since the beginning of the war, the number of the Panchayat Schools remained steady and stationary. One of the reasons responsible for their slow growth was the poverty and reluctance of most of the villagers to provide buildings for the schools at their own cost. While the grant from the District Boards was very inadequate, the capacity to raise their own resources was not everywhere happy.

In Kurnool and Bellary, Districts, the Panchayat Schools were not so prominent or popular as in the Circars.

PART II

Actual conditions as revealed by the survey.

All the Panchayat Schools selected for enquiry were from Minor Panchayats. Conditions were found to be very unsatisfactory and unattractive for teachers to come and work in these schools. Presidents of the Panchayat Boards were very often to appoint and dismiss the teachers for unsatisfactory work. The teachers went and joined other schools suppressing their previous records. All this was done very often without the necessary permission of the District Educational Officer.

Condition in selected Panchayat Schools in Madras. (1946)

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Place	District	Established in	No. of Teachers	Salary		Number of Pupils	Working Hours		Government Grant per annum
				p. m.	D. A. p. m.		a. m.	p. m.	
Avidi	East Godavari	1930	2	Rs. 15	Rs. 10	50	7-30—10-30	2-5	R. s. 60
Doddampeta	Vizagapatam	1925	4	**	**	80	-do-	-do-	***
Kothavalasa		1927	2	16	17	53	7-10	2-5	900
" Dabalu	do.	1931	3	17	16	60	-do-	-do-	826
Itempudi	West Godavari	1928	2	17	16	118	-do-	-do-	900
Inaparru	do.	1928	3	22	16	90	-do-	-do-	826
Vemavaram	do.	1928	2	17	26	88	-do-	-do-	***
				+ 8		60			
Gorantala	Anantpur	1928	1	12	16	50	-do-	-do-	***
Lepakshi	do.	1933	1	15	18	80	-do-	-do-	***
Gudur	Kistna	1928	1	12	16	60	-do-	-do-	***

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**** — Details not available

In East Godavari the Panchayat school for instance at Avidi was started in 1930 by an order of the Registrar General of Panchayats at that time. It was providing instruction upto vernacular 5th standard. The Panchayat provided the school with an independent building of its own in 1934. The pay of the teacher was met with from the grant of the Inspector of Local Boards i. e. yearly Rs. 60 and the additional expenditure being met with from the funds of the Panchayat. Due to financial disability of the Panchayat, the running of the school was also very unsatisfactory. The teacher was getting Rs. 15/- p. m. His appointment, promotion, suspension or dismissal were all entirely at the mercy of Panchayat subject to the control of the District Educational Officer. The usual working of the school was from 7-30 to 10-30 a. m. and 2-0 to 5-0 p. m. Doddampeta Panchayat School in the same district was reported to be working very satisfactorily, but the lack of sufficient co-operation did not make it possible for conducting actual investigation into the working of this school. In West Godavari two Panchayat Schools were chosen for survey, one known for its efficiency and the other known for its unsatisfactory management i. e. Inaparru and Itempudi respectively. 871
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In Inaparru, the Panchayat School was happy under the management of the Panchayat Board which looked to its efficient working. It had 3 teachers. The school was getting a grant of Rs. 826/- and the scales of pay of the teachers were for 2nd grade, basic Rs. 22/- plus Rs. 16/- D. A. and for higher grade, basic Rs. 17/- plus Rs. 8/- plus Rs. 16/- D. A. All the teachers were senior ones and were eager to serve the school without leaving it, in spite of the low remuneration compared with that given by the District Board Schools. This was because of the smooth relations existing between the Board and the School. There were about 88 boys and girls. The average attendance was about 60.

The grant of the teacher's pay from the Inspector of Local Boards was received only once in a year, but, the Panchayat Board paid its teachers regularly, granted them casual leaves of 15 days in a year and in addition to giving them whatever other meagre facilities it could give.

Here the teachers feel that if their scales of pay were revised and they were paid the same scales as those of the District Board they would have better incentive to work.

The working hours were from 7 to 10 a. m. and 2 to 5 p. m. The school was closed in agricultural season and worked in summer instead, to avoid greater absence of children of the cultivators. The

871 Panchayat Schools were never properly inspected either by the
875 District Board or by the Governments' Inspectors.

The school in Itempudi presented a wide contrast to that in Inaparru. Here the school was started about 15 years ago and 3 teachers were found to be working. A free site was given by the villagers to construct a building for the school, but, as the proposed building had not materialised so far, the school was situated in a rented building.

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The grant from the Inspector of Local Boards was Rs. 900 per annum for the running of the Panchayat School, and the pay scale of the teachers was Rs. 17 basic plus Rs. 16 D. A per month. The strength of the school, both boys and girls including, came to 90. The school worked from 7 to 10 a. m. and 2 to 5 p. m.

The Panchayat Board appointed the teachers, gave them furniture, buildings, contingencies towards stationery, supervised the school attendance and checked the school teachers' work.

But the school teachers were in general a most dissatisfied lot. For grant of leave, the permission of the Dy. Inspector, District Educational Officer and Inspector of Local Board was required, with the ultimate result of their not getting it, or getting it long after they required it. Hence the teachers demanded leave rules, provident fund facilities, annual or biennial increments, introduction of service registers, promotions, transfers, pension and provincialization of their services, instead of keeping them at the mercy of the Panchayat Boards, which were very often hot beds of party strife and corruption. Another difficulty was they did not get even that inadequate and miserable pay for five to six months. It was becoming very difficult for them to pull on for such long intervals without any aid from the Panchayat. The Panchayat was too poor to advance them with funds till they got the grant from the Inspector of Local Boards.

Itempudi Panchayat School was thus an example of the unsatisfactory type of Panchayat School management, which never thought of the prospects and happiness of the teachers who worked for the social well-being of the village community.

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Similarly such good and bad examples of Panchayat Schools were to be found in every district. In Vizagapatam, Kothavalasa Panchayat was running an efficient Panchayat Board School. Govada which was having an elementary school was enthusiastic enough to start a high school.

In Kothavalasa the first Panchayat School was started in 1927, the second in 1928, the third and the fourth in 1930, and another

in 1931 at Dabalu hamlet in the Panchayat. Another was started in Chipuruvalasa another hamlet but that was subsequently abolished by the District Board due to its inferior working. In Chipuruvalasa School there were two teachers and 42 boys and girls. In Kothavalasa, there were two teachers and the strength of the school was 53. In Kothavalasa, strength of the Dabalu school was 118, while the number of the teachers was 3 and another was to be appointed. In Watti another hamlet it was a single teacher school with a strength of 35. 871

While thus Kothavalasa Panchayat proper was running two schools, the suburbs were having 2 each at a distance of only 3 miles. Independent school building was provided for only one school at Dabalu, while the other school was kept in a rented building.

The scale of pay for the teachers was Rs. 15 plus Rs. 16 D. A. There were no rules for leave, promotion, increment or pension. The teachers could be appointed as well as dismissed by the Panchayat, subject, of course, to the approval of the District Educational Officer. The school teacher could go in appeal in case injustice was done to him by the Panchayat. 871
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The working hours of the school were the same here as in other Panchayat Schools, 7-10 a. m. and 2-5 p. m.

In Gorantala originally there were two Panchayat Schools, one at Gummaigari Palli and the other at Singireddi Palli. The school at Singireddi Palli was closed due to the want of a teacher, because the scale of pay in force was only Rs. 12 plus Rs. 16 D. A. Though the President and members of the Panchayat supervised the working of the school from time to time, as no incentive was ever provided for the teachers, they usually got disgusted soon, and went out in search of better jobs.

Lepakshi Panchayat near Hindupur in Anantpur had a Panchayat School since 1933. Since the pay of the teacher was only Rs. 15 plus Rs. 18 D. A. three teachers already changed hands and nobody was prepared to work on the low remuneration offered, though the Panchayat paid for its contingencies, furniture and stationary.

PART III

Observations

The institution of Panchayat School had everything in it to commend, but in actual practice there were several snags which should be removed if it is to work properly. 871

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Some Panchayat Schools had nice school buildings in addition to grants for contingencies from the Panchayats, District Board or the State Government. Sometimes the contributions were from the enthusiastic public. But there were still many bad specimens. The poor salary scales of the Panchayat school teachers cast a great slur against them. They were a most neglected lot. In the majority of cases, they were entirely at the mercy of the Panchayats, had no service or even leave regulations, no facilities of provident fund or pension. Sometimes even the poor salary of Rs. 15 p. m. was not paid for months, till the grant from the Inspector of Local Board came to their rescue for paying them. The State Government so far did nothing to regulate the sanction of the grants in time to obviate this distress. Under such cold and distressingly discouraging circumstances, it was a miracle that the institution of the Panchayat School still survived. Its survival appeared to be in no small measure due to the public spiritedness and sense of local patriotism of the village school teachers, though in some cases, it was also due to their sense of despair or a sense of their utter helplessness.

The Panchayat Schools had several advantages in the sense that teachers and the taught knew each other intimately, the parents of the children as well as the Panchayat members would be looking to the progress of the children from time to time. But, if the Institution was to survive honourably, something should be done to improve the lot of the teachers by paying them decently and enabling them to live decent and honourable lives with a sense of security, self-respect and integrity.
